

NPS Centennial

2016 Special Events / April - October

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Jewel Cave National Monument



April 16 and 17

Junior Ranger Days / Celebrate National Park Week!

Location: April 16 – Jewel Cave Visitor Center

Time: 10:00 – 11:30 AM

April 17 – The Journey Museum / Rapid City, South Dakota

4:00 to 5:00 PM

Whether you can visit the Monument or take part in the program at The Journey Museum, these engaging Junior Ranger Days are for families and kids. Please take note of the locations and times for each date (see above). Youth ages 5-12 can take part to become Junior Rangers, while kids ages 3-4 can become Pee Wee Rangers. All youth participants need to be accompanied by a parent or adult chaperone.

On each date, participants will learn some basic techniques for mapping and surveying a cave passageway. Working in small groups, kids will test their skills at measuring spaces, drafting maps, and recording data. Although conducted in a classroom-like setting, participants will gain an awareness and appreciation for the duties of a volunteer caver.

NOTE: For families with children in the 4th grade, The Journey Museum is offering a computer station for those who wish to register for the Every Kid in a Park (EKIP) Campaign. This program provides a voucher that can be turned in to a park site in exchange for an EKIP annual pass.

April 17

Jewel Cave: No End in Sight

Location: The Journey Museum / Rapid City, South Dakota

Time: 2:00 to 3:00 PM

In celebration of National Park Week, the Monument is partnering with The Journey Museum in Rapid City to host an informational program about volunteer cavers. Over the years, the Monument has utilized volunteer cavers to explore and discover new parts of Jewel Cave.

Since the 1950s, many miles of cave have been mapped. Yet the map continues to change and capture the attention of staff and visitors. Whether it relates to finding new passages or being the first person to witness a new cave formation, the excitement of caving abounds at the Monument. In essence, Jewel Cave can easily be considered one of the last (and most complex) frontiers in the world.

This program highlights the resource significance of Jewel Cave and showcases the volunteer efforts of several dedicated cavers. A special thanks to the Journey Museum for allowing this forum and for opening its doors to the National Park Service.



June 4

National Trails Day

Location: Jewel Cave Visitor Center

Time: 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Come celebrate National Trails Day at Jewel Cave by taking part in two ranger-guided hikes. The first hike is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. and casually walks through a ponderosa pine forest. The Roof Trail is one-quarter mile in length and is considered an easy route. This hike is great for families with young children or for those with some mobility issues.

The second hike is slated for 1:00 p.m. on the Canyons Trail and explores the wildfire scars from August 2000. The Jasper Fire burned through about 95 percent of the Monument and left behind a landscape of natural changes. This hike will take participants through the fire scar and showcase the current benefits provided to an assortment of wildlife species.

Interested participants should dress according to the current weather conditions and wear sturdy shoes or boots. All participants should bring their own snacks and beverages, as limited supplies are available at the visitor center. For more information, contact the visitor center directly at (605) 673-8300 and speak with a park ranger. NOTE: Neither trail is accessible for strollers or wheelchairs.

June 25 / July 23 / August 27 / September 24

Junior Ranger Days

Location: Jewel Cave Visitor Center

Time: 10:00 to 11:30 AM

Junior Ranger Days are great ways to introduce youngsters to the National Park Service. Maybe you want to learn more about Jewel Cave, or perhaps your children are collecting Junior Ranger badges? Either way, take part in any of the above program dates for a lively and interactive program with a park ranger. Youth ages 5-12 can take part to become Junior Rangers, while kids ages 3-4 can become Pee Wee Rangers. All youth participants need to be accompanied by a parent or adult chaperone.

June 25 – Sketch an Artistic Nature Scene

July 23 – What Comes Out After Dark?

August 27 – Become a Wildlife Detective

September 24 – How Do You Make a Bat Happy?

NOTE: Reservations are not required for any Junior Ranger Day; however, some programming supplies may be limited to a first come first serve basis.



July 2 and August 13
Live Birds of Prey Program
Location: Jewel Cave Visitor Center
Time: 1:00 PM

As a special program during the NPS Centennial, the Black Hills Raptor Center is offering two programs that focus on birds of prey. Due to the open landscape surrounding the Monument, several birds of prey are often seen in the area during the summer months. How can they be identified? What do they eat? Where do they live? If you ever wanted to see some birds of prey up close, mark your calendar for these program dates.

July 16
Cub Scout Adventures
Location: Jewel Cave Visitor Center
Time: 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Jewel Cave National Monument is partnering with the Black Hills Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America to offer a special Cub Scout event. Various activity stations offer Cub Scouts an opportunity to learn about wildlife, conservation management, geology, hiking, and other environmental education topics. Participating scouts work directly with resource professionals to learn about the outdoors and America's natural and cultural heritage.

Reservations are required and can be made after June 1. Interested Cub Scouts and their families should contact the visitor center at 605-673-8300 for more information or to make a reservation. This event started in 2011 with a generous Impact Grant from the National Park Foundation. NOTE: All Cub Scouts and participating youth must be accompanied by a parent, adult chaperone, or Scout Leader.



September 9-10
Project Underground - Educator's Workshop
Location: Jewel Cave Training Facility
Time: Friday - 7:00 PM to Sunday - 11:00 AM

Calling all educators! If you are looking for new ways to implement Earth science and geology-related topics into your curriculum, this workshop is just for you.

Participants learn how to map caves, create cave features, and simply immerse themselves into the world of cave and karst environments. Using a mixture of classroom presentations and cave experiences, park rangers offer teachers a variety of techniques for creative lesson plans. You want to be engaged and learn about a fascinating natural feature? Come join the Monument in mid-September for a lively training.

Registration begins on May 1, 2016. Education credit is available for those seeking professional development certification.

September 24
National Public Lands Day / Helping Hands for America's Lands
Location: Jewel Cave Visitor Center
Time: 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Help us celebrate the 23rd National Public Lands Day by taking part in several volunteer projects. Not only is this a free entrance day for all federal public lands, including guided cave tours at the Monument, the nationwide special event is geared toward volunteerism. Participants can work on the surface clearing brush, raking pine needles, picking up litter, or helping with minor maintenance projects. Or some activities may be conducted inside the cave with interested volunteers.

In 2015, approximately 200,000 volunteers and park visitors celebrated on public lands at 2,520 sites in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Why just visit a park site? Engage yourself with a fun volunteer activity. . . meet other park enthusiasts. . . and simply enjoy a day in the outdoors. Participants who volunteer at least one hour will receive a free (one-time) federal lands pass for use within a calendar year. Registration begins on August 1, 2016.

October 15
Celebrate Earth Science Week (October 9-15)
Location: Jewel Cave Visitor Center
Time: 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Earth Science Week has been around since 1998; however, this is the first year that the Monument is taking part with a variety of youth programs to celebrate the event. Jewel Cave is a rich geological resource, which captivates visitor attention every year. What better way to showcase its features and complement the Earth Sciences than through a special event?

Families are encouraged to spend the afternoon at the Monument and take part in several hands-on, science-related activities. Kids also have the chance to earn a Junior Ranger or Pee Wee Ranger badge and embroidered patch. Interested participants may wish to visit other park sites in the area, as there are numerous NPS locations in the Black Hills that complement the Earth Sciences.

NOTE: Reservations are not required for activities during Earth Science Week; however, some programming supplies may be limited to a first come first serve basis.